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756 Koutka their new-born children, who, the
776 moment they have left their cradle, are des-
786 tined to become chamans. The veneration
534 of the inhabitants of this village for sorce-
177 cerers can scarcely be conceived; it ap-
proaches to insanity, and is really to be pitied; for the extravagant and wild absurdities by which these magicians keep alive the credulity of their compatriots, excites our indignation rather than our laughter. At present they do not profess their art openly, or give the same splendour they once did to their necromancy. They no longer decorate their garments with mystic rings and other symbolic figures of metal, that jingled together upon the slightest motion of their body. In like manner they have abandoned the kind of kettle *, which they used to strike with a sort of musical intonation in their pretended en-

* A sort of *tambour de vasque* called *bouben*. It is still in use amongst the Yakoutsk, as will be seen hereafter.

chantments,

[Mashura--analyst]

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756 chantments, and with which they announc-
786 ed their approach. In ſhort, they have for-
787 ſaken all their magic inſtruments. The following are the ceremonies they obſerve in their aſſemblies, which they are careful to hold in ſecret, though not the leſs frequently on that account. Conceive of a circle of ſpectators, ſtupidly rapt in attention and ranged round the magician, male or female, for as I have before obſerved, the women are equally initiated into the myſteries. All at once he begins to ſing, or to utter ſhrill ſounds without either meaſure or ſignification. The docile aſſembly ſtrike in with him, and the concert becomes a medley of harſh and inſupportable diſcords. By degrees the chaman is warmed, and he begins to dance to the confuſed accents of his auditory, who become hoarſe and exhauſted from the violence of their exertions. As the prophetic ſpirit is excited in the miniſter of their Koutka, the animation

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756 mation of the dance increaſes. Like the
786 Pythian on the tripos, he rolls his ghaſtly
787 and haggard eyes; all his motions are convulſive; his mouth is drawn awry, his limbs ſtiffened, and every diſtortion and grimace is put in practice by him, to the great admiration of his diſciples. Having acted theſe buffooneries for ſome time, he ſuddenly ſtops, as if inſpired, and becomes now as compoſed as he was before agitated. It is the ſacred collectedneſs of a man full of the god that governs him, and who is about to ſpeak by his voice. Surpriſed and trembling, the aſſembly is inſtantly mute, in expectation of the marvels that are to be revealed. The ſelf-created prophet then utters at different intervals, broken ſentences, words without meaning, and what ever nonſenſe comes into the head of the impoſtor; and this is invariably conſidered as the effect of inſpiration. His jargon is accompanied either with a torrent

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756 torrent of tears or loud burſts of laughter,
786 according to the complexion of the tidings
787 he has to announce; and the expreſſion and geſture of the orator vary in conformity to his feelings. I was furniſhed with this account by perſons entitled to credit, and who had contrived to be preſent at theſe abſurd revelations.

000 There ſeems to be ſome analogy between theſe chamans, and the ſect called quakers. The quakers pretend equally to inſpiration, and there are individuls among them, who, guided by its ſuppoſed impulſe, hold forth in their ſilent meetings, and break out in piteous lamentations, or ſudden ſtarts of extravagant joy. The difference is this: theſe prompt orators harangue extempore upon the ſubject of morality, whoſe fundamental principles they endeavour to recommend; whereas the Kamtſchadale declaimers underſtand not a word of what they